

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 VIENTI 01989 210644Z

21

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

AID-05 SR-02 ORM-01 /064 W
----- 033228

R 210528Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2997

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 1989

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, EAID, LA

SUBJECT: PGNU FOREIGN MINISTRY PROPOSES CONDITIONS FOR
U.S. AIR OPERATIONS AND AID TO REFUGEES

REFS: A) VIENTIANE 0505

B) VIENTIANE 1240

BEGIN SUMMARY: PGNU FOREIGN MINISTRY, CLEARLY REFLECTING
PATHET LAO INFLUENCE, HAS USED MECHANISM OF AN INTERIM
REPLY TO OUR PROTESTS AGAINST JANUARY 18 BIRD AIR HELICOPTER
SHOOT-DOWN TO SUGGEST VAGUE BUT OMINOUS CONTROLS ON USG
AIR OPERATIONS AND ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES. WE INTEND TO
IGNORE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S SUGGESTED "PRINCIPLES" AND INSTEAD
TO LAUNCH QUIET COUNTER-ACTION WITH DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES
AND VIENTIANE SIDE LEADERSHIP. END SUMMARY

1. EMBASSY ON MARCH 17 RECEIVED NOTE DATED MARCH 14
FROM FOREIGN MINISTRY IN RESPONSE TO OUR TWO NOTES OF
JANUARY 22 AND FEBRUARY 19 (REFTELS) PROTESTING
RESPECTIVELY JANUARY 18 SHOOT-DOWN OF BIRD AIR AND THE
PATHET LAO BROADCAST WHICH BOASTED OF RESPONSIBILITY
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 VIENTI 01989 210644Z

THEREFOR. NOTE SAYS IN ESSENCE THAT OUR PROTESTS HAVE

BEEN FORWARDED TO VIENTIANE REPRESENTATIVE OF LPF BUT GOES ON TO RAISE TWO POTENTIALLY TROUBLESOME "CONDITIONS" WITH WHICH FONMIN WOULD HAVE US COMPLY IN ORDER TO AVOID REPETITION.

2. FULL TEXT OF FONMIN NOTE IN EMBASSY'S INFORMAL TRANSLATION IS AS FOLLOWS:

QUOTE - THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF PGNU OF LAOS PRESENTS ITS COMPLIMENTS TO U.S. EMBASSY IN VIENTIANE AND HAS HONOR TO ACKNOWLEDGE RECEIPT OF ITS NOTES NO. 042 OF 22 JANUARY 1975 AND NO. 080 OF 19 FEBRUARY 1975, CONCERNING THE INCIDENT THAT HAPPENED TO AN UNARMED HELICOPTER OF THE BIRD AIR COMPANY UNDER CONTRACT WITH THE U.S. AID MISSION TO LAOS IN THE REGION OF NAM NGUM.

QUOTE - THE MINISTRY HAS TRANSMITTED COPIES OF THESE TWO NOTES TO THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PATRIOTIC FRONT IN VIENTIANE, ASKING HIM TO FURNISH TO THE PGNU THE PARTICULARS AND THE ELEMENTS OF A REPLY CONCERNING THIS UNFORTUNATE AFFAIR.

QUOTE - WHILE PROFOUNDLY REGRETTING THIS UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT, THE MINISTRY WOULD WISH, NEVERTHELESS, TO DRAW THE EMBASSY'S ATTENTION TO THE NECESSITY OF OBTAINING THE PRIOR AGREEMENT OF THE PGNU BEFORE CARRYING OUT, IN THE INTERIOR OF THE KINGDOM, MISSIONS OR OPERATIONS OF WHATEVER NATURE.

QUOTE - THE MINISTRY REMINDS THE EMBASSY THAT HUMANITARIAN AID TO REFUGEES SHOULD BE CHanneled THROUGH THE PGNU, THE JCCIA, OR THE UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES IN VIENTIANE.

QUOTE - IN ORDER TO AVOID ANY SIMILAR INCIDENTS IN THE FUTURE, THE MINISTRY URGENTLY ASKS THE EMBASSY TO COMPLY WITH THE ABOVE-MENTIONED PRINCIPLES. (COMPLIMENTARY CLOSE.) UNQUOTE

3. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THE CONDITION REGARDING ADVANCE NOTIFICATION OF AIRCRAFT MOVEMENTS IS SERIOUS MANIFESTATION OF LONG-ANTICIPATED PATHET LAO ATTEMPT TO RESTRICT OUR OPERATIONS. IT IS OF A PIECE WITH OTHER MOVES BY PL THROUGH PGNU AND JCCIA, ALL OF WHICH WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY IGNORED TO DATE, TO MONITOR U.S. PRESENCE. THESE INCLUDE FONMIN REQUESTS FOR LISTINGS OF ALL U.S.,
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PAGE 03 VIENTI 01989 210644Z

FSL AND TCN EMPLOYEES BY NAME, ADDRESS AND FUNCTION AND OF DOMESTIC SERVANTS EMPLOYED BY U.S. PERSONNEL; PL INQUIRIES INTO SPECIFICS OF OUR MAP AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS; FONMIN ATTEMPT, INSPIRED BY MINISTER PHOUMI VONGVICHIT, TO GAIN CONTROL OVER MAJOR ASPECTS OF FOREIGN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (VIENTIANE 1743); AND REPEATED LPF ASSERTIONS THAT ALL FOREIGN ASSISTANCE TO LAOS SHOULD BE IN FORM OF "BLANK CHECK" OR IN RESPONSE TO SPECIFIC

PGNU REQUEST.

4. WE HAVE DEBATED HERE THE PROS AND CONS OF REPLYING TO THIS NOTE. IT WOULD BE EASY TO REFUTE THE SUGGESTION REGARDING ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES BY MAKING THE POINT THAT ALL OUR REFUGEE ASSISTANCE OVER LAST TEN YEARS HAS BEEN RENDERED THROUGH MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE. WITH REGARD TO AIR OPERATIONS, WE COULD ALSO POINT OUT THAT LAOS LACKS EQUIPMENT AND PERSONNEL TO CONTROL DOMESTIC AIR TRAFFIC, MAKING ADVANCE NOTIFICATION MEANINGLESS FROM STANDPOINT OF SAFETY.

5. WE HAVE CONCLUDED, HOWEVER, THAT TO REPLY AT THIS POINT WOULD BE TO PLAY INTO PL HANDS, SINCE IT COULD IN EFFECT ENGAGE A SERIOUS DISCUSSION OF THESE ISSUES. ADVANCE NOTIFICATION PERIODS COULD BE PROGRESSIVELY LENGTHENED AND WE WOULD SOON FIND OURSELVES IN AN IMPOSSIBLE BUREAUCRATIC MORASS WITH INDIVIDUAL FLIGHTS AND PROJECTS SUBJECT TO COMMUNIST VETO. (TWO LPF OFFICIALS --MIN/ECON SOTH PHETRASY AND MIN/INFO CHEF DE CABINET KHAMSENGKEO SENGSAITHITH -- HAVE TOLD POLITICAL COUNSELOR RECENTLY THAT JANUARY 18 HELICOPTER INCIDENT COULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED HAD WE GIVEN ADVANCE NOTICE OF FLIGHT TO JCCIA. IMPLICATION IN BOTH CASES WAS CLEARLY THAT PL WANTED TO ESTABLISH CONTROL OF ALL OUR AIR OPERATIONS.)

6. THEREFORE, WE INTEND INSTEAD TO CONCERT WITH FRIENDLY DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES (PARTICULARLY BRITISH AND FRENCH, WHO ALSO HAVE AIRCRAFT) TO EXPLAIN COMPLICATIONS AS WE SEEM THEM AND TO URGE CONCERTED RESISTANCE. WE WILL MAKE SIMILAR POINTS TO SENIOR VIENTIANE SIDE OFFICIALS, INCLUDING PRIME MINISTER AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME, AND STIMULATE THEM TO HEAD OFF FURTHER ELEMENTS OF
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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 VIENTI 01989 210644Z

THIS OBVIOUS SQUEEZE-PLAY. WE WILL POINT OUT THAT OUR FLIGHTS, GROUND TRAVEL AND AID PROJECTS ARE CONFINED TO VIENTIANE ZONE AND THAT COMPLIANCE WITH FONMIN "PRINCIPLES" WOULD SIMPLY ENHANCE LPF CAPACITY TO DICTATE WHAT HAPPENS IN VIENTIANE SIDE'S ZONE.

7. WE DO NOT EXPECT TO BE ASKED BY LPF FONMIN OFFICIALS ABOUT A REPLY TO THE MARCH 14 NOTE, BUT, IF QUERIED, WE WILL SAY WE CONSIDER THAT OUR OPERATIONS ARE CARRIED OUT WITH THE AGREEMENT OF THE PGNU.
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NNN

Message Attributes

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